Care Bear COUSINS™

The Best Prize of All

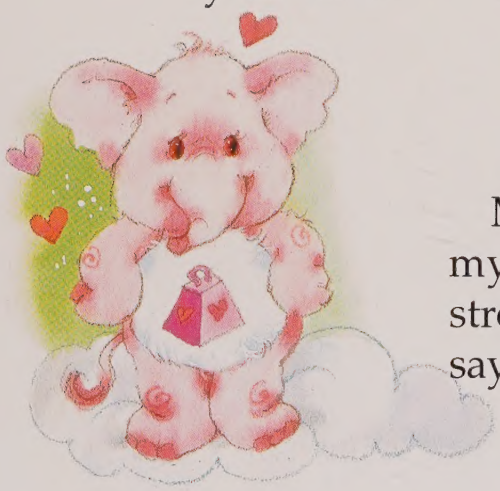
A Parker Brothers Story Book

Meet the Care Bear Cousins

They help you put your good feelings into action. The pictures on their tummies tell what's special about each one of this great group.

Hello! I'm Brave Heart Lion; it's my job to show that you can be a leader if you have kindness in your heart.

I'm Playful Heart Monkey. I love good times, and I want to remind you that fun can be found everywhere if you have joy in your heart.



My name is Lotsa Heart Elephant, and my job is to show you that your real strength shows through when you never say, "it can't be done."

I'm Bright Heart Raccoon, and I want to show you that learning can be fun, especially when the solution to the problem helps a friend.

I'm here to show you that when someone is in need, the best cure is love and kindness. That's why they call me Gentle Heart Lamb.

I'm Swift Heart Rabbit. Remember that no matter how busy life gets, there's always time to spread happiness and good cheer.

I'm Proud Heart Cat, and I want you to remember that you should take pride in yourself and do your best in everything you attempt.

My job is to remind you that loyalty and honesty are the things upon which you build true friendship. That's why my name is Loyal Heart Dog.

Making others feel confident and comfortable is the most important job I can think of. That's why I'm known as Cozy Heart Penguin.

I'm Treat Heart Pig, and I say that any day can be a holiday when you help others enjoy themselves.

Now that you've met all of the Care Bear Cousins, we hope that you'll want to become our friends just as much as we want to be friends with you.

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Care Bear COUSINS

The Best Prize of All

Story by Mark Taylor
Pictures by Joe Ewers

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Wendy was in the third grade, and there were many things that she liked.

She liked to dance to records with her friends.

She liked school — most of the time.

She liked to pet her dog, Scruffer.

Most of all, Wendy liked to play games. She learned all the rules for any game she played, and she played at each one very hard. Baseball, tennis and soccer were the games she liked the most.

There was one thing, however, about games and sports that Wendy did not like. She did not like to lose at any game she played. She *hated* it when she lost. Wendy was a nice girl, but she did not act very nicely when she lost at a game.

One day during recess, Wendy stomped over to the playground benches and plunked herself down. She kicked her lunch box.

"What's wrong?" asked her friend, Sue.

"I lost the race," said Wendy.

"That's too bad," said Sue, "but you can't win all the time."

"But I'm usually faster than Billy," muttered Wendy. "It's not fair that he beat me today."

"Well," said Sue, "why don't you ask him to race again? Maybe you will beat him this time."

"That's a good idea," said Wendy. She challenged Billy to another race, but she didn't win. Billy won, and many of the kids gave him a cheer. Wendy was so upset that she marched off by herself.

"Hey, Wendy," one of the boys called, "don't go away. We're going to play soccer. Come play. We need you."

"No," said Wendy angrily. "I don't feel like playing."

"Come on, Wendy," Sue called. "It will be fun."

Wendy pretended not to hear. She still felt angry about the races. She walked to a quiet place under a big, old tree where she could sit alone.

"My head hurts," a deep and rumbly voice said suddenly. "I always get a pain in my head when I see someone who is not being a good sport."

Wendy was surprised. "Who is talking?" she said. "And where are you?"

"Here I am," said the deep, rumbly voice.

Wendy looked around. She looked right into the eyes of a lion who was staring at her from the other side of the tree!

"Are you going to bite me?" Wendy said in a small, frightened voice.

"Goodness, no!" the lion chuckled. He came around the tree and stood in front of Wendy. He had a big smile on his face and a big heart with a crown on his tummy. "I'm Brave Heart Lion. I came to help you."

"Help me?" Wendy said. "I'm O.K."

"Then why won't you play with your friends?" said Brave Heart Lion. "Don't you want anyone else to win?"

Wendy thought for a moment then she said, "I say it's alright if someone else wins, but underneath I guess I like to be the best. I get mad if I lose."

"I like being best, too," said Brave Heart Lion. "But I like being best at what really counts. There is only one thing I am best at *all* the time."

"What is that?" asked Wendy.

"I'm *always* the best at being myself," said Brave Heart Lion. "I'm a wonderful *me*, and when I play games, I play to have a good time. Win some; lose some. No matter how it turns out, I have fun."

"Don't you ever play to win?" said Wendy.

"Oh, sure," said Brave Heart Lion. "But if I don't win, I don't get mad. Instead I look and see how good others feel when they get a chance to win."

"That's really crazy," said Wendy. "If I were a lion, I would win all the time, or I would eat everyone up!"

Brave Heart Lion laughed so hard that his tummy shook. "If you ate everyone up, who would be left to play with?" he said.

Wendy thought about that. "Maybe no one," she said, "but I still hate losing."

"Well, I'm going to help you do something about that," said Brave Heart Lion wisely.

"Impossible!" Wendy said.

"Oh, not impossible," said Brave Heart, "but I need some time to think about it. Meet me here tomorrow before school begins. I'll have an idea then."

Brave Heart Lion disappeared behind the tree, and Wendy hurried home. That night she dreamed about Brave Heart. He was giving a medal to Billy. Wendy woke up. Even in the dream she felt bad when she didn't win.

The next morning she hurried to school. It was good to see Brave Heart Lion by the tree.

"I've thought of something. I knew I would," said Brave Heart. "You are a difficult case, but I've thought of something for you to do. This cutout is for you. It's a heart with a crown, just like the one on my tummy. Stick it on your jacket. It's to remind you to be a good sport. If you lose a game and start to feel angry, touch the crown and make yourself say, 'that was a good game, and it was fun.'"

"Why?" asked Wendy.

"To get in the habit," said Brave Heart Lion firmly. "Soon you won't even have to think about it. Come with me. I want to show you something." Brave Heart walked toward the school playing fields that were behind a hedge of tall bushes.

"I have to be in school soon," said Wendy.

Brave Heart Lion took Wendy by the hand and said, "We'll be back in time."

Before she could object, Wendy found herself at the edge of the playing field. She could hardly believe her eyes. All the Care Bear Cousins were playing soccer!

"Let me play, too," called out Brave Heart Lion, and he scampered onto the field. "I don't kick very well, but I love to make up plays as I go along."

It was very funny. Brave Heart really wasn't a very good soccer player. He kicked the ball anywhere as hard as he could. He tripped over his own feet and fell down. The other Care Bear Cousins didn't seem to mind, and Brave Heart called out, "This is fun!"

Wendy shook her head in amazement. Brave Heart seemed to be having so much fun playing that it didn't matter who won the game.

"Brave Heart Lion is a wonderful fellow," said a soft, purring voice. Wendy turned to see a very well-brushed cat with a star on its tummy. In the middle of the star was a heart. "I'm Proud Heart Cat," said the cat. "I take pride in looking my best and in doing my best, just like you."

"Do you try to win at games, too?" Wendy asked. "Brave Heart acts as if it doesn't matter whether you win or lose."

"I think a person should always do her best," said Proud Heart Cat.

"I try to do my best," said Wendy, "so I follow the rules and practice hard. That should make me win."

Proud Heart gazed at Wendy. Finally she said, "First, you must try to understand that there is a difference between doing your best and winning. Even if you are very good at a game and try your best, someday, somewhere, you may meet someone who will beat you at it. Second, it is sometimes good to do things just for the fun of it — the way Brave Heart plays soccer."

"But I want to win."

"So do the others you are playing against," said Proud Heart Cat. "You have to practice being a good sport. Then it gets easier and easier, and you have more fun, win or lose."

"Really?" said Wendy doubtfully.

"Really. Now we are all going to play the No Rules game," said Proud Heart, "and you are going to play with us."

"I don't know how, and I might lose," Wendy said.

"In this game there are no winners or losers," said Proud Heart.

"Then why play?" asked Wendy.

"You'll see," answered Proud Heart.

Wendy found herself playing the No Rules game with the Care Bear Cousins. In the game you had to hit balls with a bat, with your head, and with your body. You had to kick balls, and bounce them, and run with them. It was impossible to tell which team you were on or whether you had made the right move. At first Wendy was confused. Then she relaxed and began to have fun. Finally, after everyone had run around and laughed a great deal, a whistle blew and a gong was struck. They all stopped playing and smiled at one another.

"The No Rules game is over," said Playful Heart Monkey.

"Who won?" Wendy couldn't resist asking.

"We all did!" exclaimed Loyal Heart Dog.

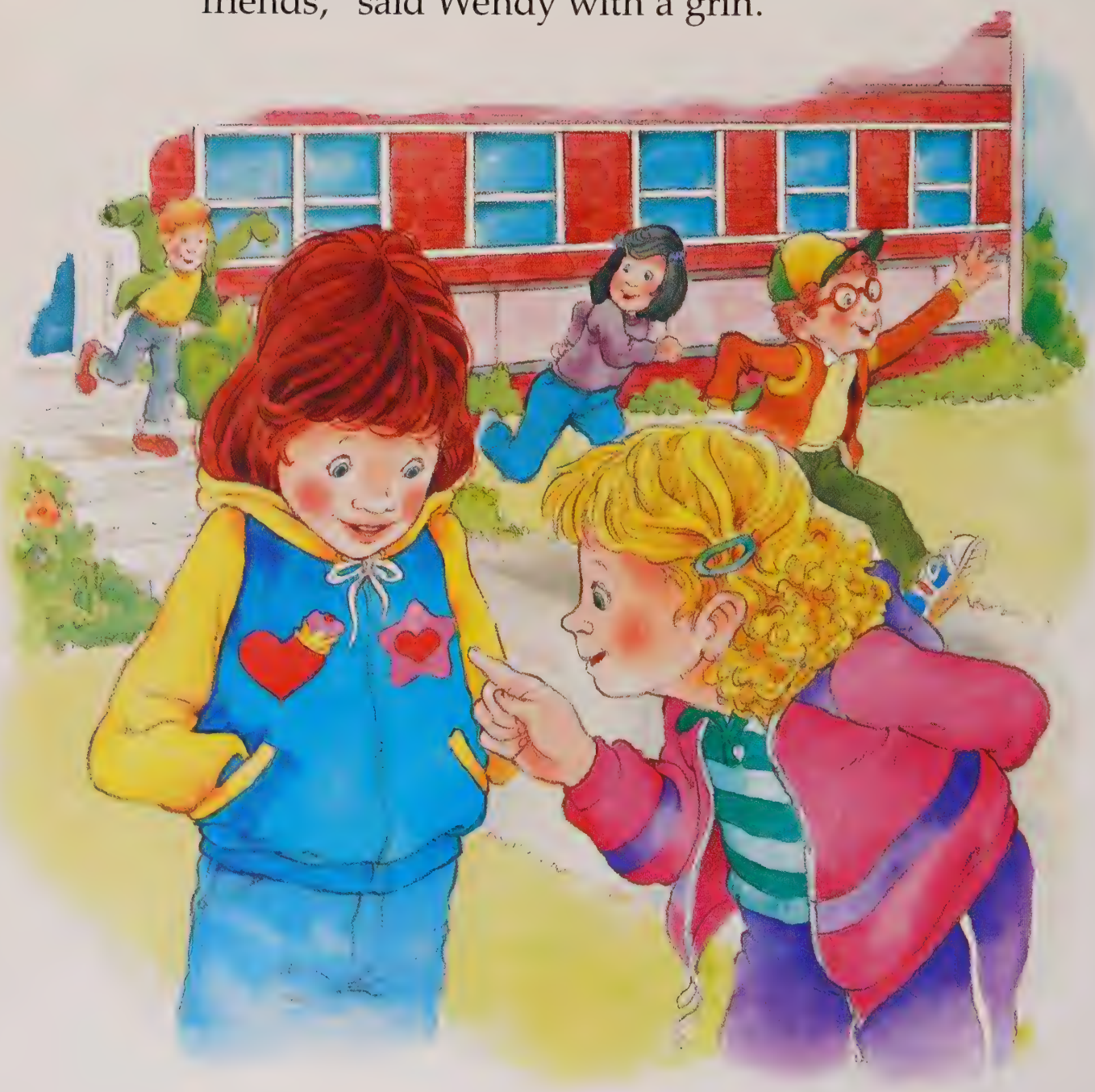
Wendy hesitated a moment and then broke into a big smile. "You're right," she said. "We all won, and we all had fun. No one is a loser in this game. I think I like that."

"If you like it," said Brave Heart Lion, "why not try to remember that games are mostly for fun the next time you play with your friends?"

"I'll try," Wendy promised. Then she heard the school bell ring. "Oops! I'd better get going. I'll be late for school." She waved to the Care Bear Cousins and ran to her classroom.

That morning at recess Sue pointed to Wendy's jacket and said, "Where did you get those pretty designs?"

Wendy looked down. On one side of her jacket was a heart with a crown. On the other side was a star with a heart in the center. "Oh, they're a present from two friends," said Wendy with a grin.



Wendy and Sue ran over to join a softball game. In that game Wendy got three hits, but her team lost. Sue's team won.

As they walked back to class, Wendy felt herself begin to get angry, but then she touched the design on her jacket. She turned to Sue. "That was a good game," Wendy said. "Your team played well."

"Thanks," said Sue. Then she smiled at Wendy and added, "You know, Wendy, you were always the best player in our class, but *now* I think you are the best sport, too."

Wendy laughed, and she thought that she could hear Proud Heart Cat and Brave Heart Lion laughing with her.

"Sue," Wendy said, "win some; lose some. No matter how it turns out, playing games is *fun*."

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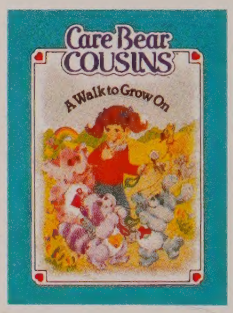
Welcome the newest members of the Care Bear family — the Care Bear Cousins. These adorable animals help children put their feelings into action.

In *The Best Prize of All*, the Care Bear Cousins help Wendy realize that playing games is great fun, whether you win or lose.



Look for the adventures of the Care Bears and the Care Bear Cousins in these and other full-color storybooks published by Parker Brothers and available now at your favorite store.

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